

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) [sent a letter today](#) to General Services Administration (GSA) Administrator Martha Johnson expressing concern that the GSA had failed to vet a contracting partner prior to entering into a \$23,000 a month lease agreement beginning in November of 2008 with Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church.

“In addition to other controversies, Dar Al-Hijrah has been publicly linked by investigators to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Fort Hood,” Issa wrote. “Because GSA committed the United States Government to make monthly rent payments to an entity with links to individual terrorists and terrorist organizations, I am specifically concerned that it appears there are insufficient procedures in place to vet potential contract partners.”

Dar Al-Hijrah is not listed in GSA’s database of individuals and entities that have been suspended or debarred from contracting with the United States Government (the “Excluded

Parties List”). The Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center is described in one Traveler Enforcement Compliance System [TECS] report as having been “under numerous investigations for financing and [providing] aid and comfort to bad [organizations] and members.” In another TECS report, Dar Al-Hijrah is described as “a mosque operating as a front for Hamas operatives in [the] U.S.”

Issa’s letter goes on to note that, “Even the most cursory review using publicly available research tools would have raised red flags when GSA considered entering into a lease with Dar Al-Hijrah...if it is the case that GSA contracted with Dar Al-Hijrah because the TECS database is not available to its contracting officers, then that is evidence of an alarming inter-agency communication failure. If GSA entered into a lease agreement with Dar Al-Hijrah without conducting even basic due diligence measures such as an FPS background check or internet search, there may be an even more problematic systemic issue.”

Fairfax County property records indicate that Dar Al-Hijrah purchased the 40,000-square-foot building in which the leased office space is located for \$5.8 million on May 23, 2008. The lease did not go into effect until November 2008. The U.S. Census Bureau officially opened its office in the Dar Al-Hijrah building in February 2009.

1. Was GSA aware of records or information linking Dar Al-Hijrah to terrorist activities or organizations when it entered into a lease agreement with the Islamic Center?

2. Does GSA coordinate the Excluded Parties List with databases such as the Traveler Enforcement Compliance System (TECS) and other databases maintained by DHS to prevent contracts with entities linked to terrorism and other criminal behavior?

3. What vetting procedures did GSA use to conduct due diligence on the Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center prior to entering into a lease agreement with the Islamic Center?

4. Do GSA contracting officials use the Traveler Enforcement Compliance System (TECS) as part of the vetting process?

5. Did GSA request a Federal Protective Service background check of Dar Al-Hijrah prior to entering into a lease agreement with the Islamic Center?

6. Identify any individuals at the General Services Administration, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Department of Homeland Security or the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the

U.S. Department of Commerce, or any other federal agency including the Executive Office of the President, who had any role in leasing office space from Dar Al-Hijrah, including but not limited to identifying the leased office space, vetting the potential landlord, and meeting with Dar Al-Hijrah officials.

7. Provide a timeline of events detailing how GSA came to contractually bind the United States Government to pay rent to Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center. The timeline should include, but not be limited to, the dates of any due diligence efforts, the dates of meetings with Dar Al-Hijrah officials, and the dates of signing of any agreements related to the lease.

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